

woman, whose devotion to her husband and his dreams is pure and true. All men approve of that kind of woman, and wish her and her book every success. Mention must be made of an excellent introduction by Mr. William Cabot, which summarises the work of previous travellers in Labrador; also of a good map by Mrs. Hubbard at the end of the volume, which will be of great service to future travellers.

J. G. MILLAIS.

A TROPIC ISLE.¹

"IF a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears." Our beachcomber is a squatter in search of the "simple

its own dung heaps. The swamp pheasant plays "hawk" to the fowls. The bee-eater and wood swallow make bee-keeping impossible. The eagle is a detective, deadly foe to snakes of land and sea. The nutmeg pigeon brings news twice a year from the outside world, and other pigeons perennially express their doleful remonstrances at the poor crops of figs on the banyan trees. Lastly, the sea birds have returned, and the owner has been driven off his own paths, annexed for their breeding fairs. There is, too, the Echidna, dainty morsel for the aged blacks, and the story of the snake and the nest eggs is charming. Of insects we desire to hear more.

In one bay is a garden of coral, killed off by brown mud after a storm, but sprouting afresh from out the slimy mass. It is pictured as a July garden—the island is situated within the Great Barrier Reef—but yet the



FIG. 1.—A Protected Coral Garden. From "The Confessions of a Beachcomber."

life." He takes up a little island off the coast of Queensland, determined to make it his home, and himself master of all the lore that is thereon. Dunk Island, as it is called, is situated about lat. 18° S., and, being really a part of Australia, with high hills and fringing reefs of coral, presents a picture which may well serve in miniature for any tropic isle of continental origin. The rainfall is abundant, and the jungle is a well-described medley of trees, ferns, and lianes, chief of them the climbing palm.

A little of the ground is cleared, the homestead is erected, the praises of the papaw and banana are sung. The beachcomber has enough and contends no more. Birds delight him and guns are taboo. However, civilisation will out, and a census is taken, social as well as numerical. The sagacious megapode hatches its enormous egg (12 per cent. of its own weight) in

most cruel battlefield of nature. Corals grow over and smother all they can. Molluscs are murderers and cannibals. "No creature at all conspicuous is safe, unless it is agile and alert, or of horrific aspect, or endowed with giant's strength, or is encased in armour." The clam sits on the coral, and becomes embedded as it grows up around. *Serpula* is more successful, raising its anemone-like head well above the surface of the coral in a tube of lime. Fish are like gigantic butterflies hovering over flowers. Bivalves tunnel the coral, and sea-urchins grind to powder its limestone ramparts, gnawing off the crumbs of coral which fill up the greater part of their digestive organs. The *bêche-de-mer* is there too, and oysters of many kinds. Then there is the dugong in herds, frolicking in the water, human in its affection for its young. It is a seaweed feeder; it does no harm—but it makes good bacon. Is the love for all nature, so markedly professed, consistent with its destruction? The descrip-

¹ "The Confessions of a Beachcomber." By E. J. Banfield. Pp. xii+336. (London; T. Fisher Unwin, 1908.) Price 15s. net.

tion of its chase was surely written by one who loved "the sport."

We would freely acknowledge the literary charm, the wealth of metaphor, the artistic qualifications, and the excellent powers of observation of our beachcomber. At the same time we direct attention to some faults in his work, because we hope to see it pass into a second edition and become a classic for naturalists. In the first place a hundred pages are dragged in quite irrelevantly at the end on the characteristics of black boys, while the last gin on Dunk Island died in 1900. The chapters are unpleasantly broken up into sections, often absolutely disconnected. The studies of the interrelations of climate, of soil, of plant life, and of animal life are what make the works of our great naturalists of enduring value. Our author is peculiarly vivid and discriminating where he allows himself to

The circumstance most affecting the labour of a Japanese in studying chemistry and other sciences, at least in the earlier days, has been the necessity to acquire ideas through one or more foreign tongues—English, German, French, Dutch—as far removed in grammar from his own tongue as could well be. This fact does, indeed, add seriously to his labour in his younger days, but it is ultimately quite other than detrimental to his progress. For this labour is largely due to the necessity from the first of getting a clear notion of the meaning of terms, which, when obtained, should be a precious possession to everyone. So, too, it may be said of the apparent burden on the youthful Japanese of having to acquire facility in writing, and that, too, with a soft brush, the vast and elaborate script of his own language. For, whilst it is true that to do so takes years of school life, it is certain and



FIG. 2.—Alcyonaria (leathery Corals) and Oysters. From "The Confessions of a Beachcomber."

draw such pictures, and we would have more of them. He has half-a-dozen islets at hand, and the varied coast of Queensland. Scientific terms and names should be carefully checked to ensure correctness. Lastly, an index is essential.

J. S. G.

CHEMISTRY IN JAPAN.¹

ALTHOUGH a very few Japanese, through reading works in Dutch, had been experimenting in chemistry some fifty years ago, it was not until about a third of a century back that the science began to be taught in Japan by experiment and by courses of lectures, and that soon after young men of that nation, already trained in chemistry, were to be seen, though rarely, in British and other European laboratories.

¹ Collection of Papers contributed on the occasion of the celebration of Prof. J. Sakurai's jubilee. Reprinted from the *Journal of the College of Science*, vol. xxv. (Tokyo, August, 1908.)

quite obvious that the task gives such delicacy of touch and such deftness in the use of the hands as proves invaluable afterwards in the arts and in the laboratory.

Somewhat more than a year ago, the half-jubilee or twenty-five years' professorship of chemistry in Tokyo of Dr. Joji Sakurai was celebrated by his colleagues, pupils, and other friends. To enlarge upon Prof. Sakurai's career as a chemist not being the object of this communication, it suffices to say of him that he is no stranger in this country, that he is the author of well-known researches, that his influence as a teacher in Japan has been great, and that he is now the director of the Imperial College of Science in Tokyo, as well as one of the professors of chemistry.

The particular purpose of this article is to direct the attention of those interested in scientific development to an incident in connection with the jubilee which, though common enough in similar cases in Germany, seems quite remarkable in a country so